

R E P O R T .

The Committee on Ways and Means, to whom so much of the Message of the Governor, as relates to the finances of the State was referred, have had the same under consideration, and submit the following report:

Upon a careful and thorough investigation of the whole subject, the committee have come to the conclusion, that though the condition of the State is one of serious embarrassment and difficulty, there is no reason to despair of her ability to meet all her engagements, and ultimately to free herself from the weight of debt, which now represses the energies of the people.

The first and most important subject which engaged the attention of the committee, was the ascertainment and application of the proper measures to enforce a compliance with the present revenue laws of the State. It seemed obvious that, unless these laws were obeyed in every part of the State, and every portion thereof, made to bear a proper share of the public burdens, that the whole system of taxation would crumble into ruins. The committee do not wish to be understood as saying, that the delinquency of one or more counties, would justify others, in withholding obedience to the law, or refusing to contribute their share of the sums required to meet the public engagements; but the manifest propriety that each and all, should pay alike, and the indispensable necessity of their doing so, to enable those engagements to be met, would render any system not attended with that essential feature, too precarious and indefensible to be permanent. The committee, therefore, in the outset, directed their attention earnestly and anxiously, to this vital subject, believing that upon the success of the measures which may be adopted to that end, the very foundation of our hopes of maintaining the honor of the State rests.

They have, therefore, bestowed great pains upon the preparation of a bill, framed to accomplish this object. This bill has been reported to the House, and is now undergoing the ordeal of a searching examination and criticism. The present is not deemed the proper occasion, to enter upon an elaborate defence of either the principles or details of the bill. That has been done, or will be